

Delta Independent Science Board Educational Briefing Questionnaire

Please provide short written responses to the following:

1. Program Title: California Water Quality Monitoring Council

2. Lead Agency/Department for Program: State Water Resources Control Board

3. Brief Description of Program:

As mandated by SB 1070 (Kehoe, 2006), the California Environmental Protection Agency and the California Natural Resources Agency entered into a Memorandum of Understanding creating the California Water Quality Monitoring Council. The statute and MOU directed the Monitoring Council to develop recommendations for maximizing the efficiency and effectiveness of existing water quality and associated ecosystem health data collection and dissemination, and for ensuring that collected data are available for use by decision makers and the public. These initial recommendations were submitted to the two Agency Secretaries in December 2008. SB 1070 also required that these recommendations lead to the development of a comprehensive monitoring program strategy for California. Based on two years of experience implementing its initial recommendations, the Monitoring Council submitted *A Comprehensive Monitoring Program Strategy for California* in December 2010.

The recommendations call for the development of a set of theme-based internet portals to provide intuitive, streamlined access to water quality and ecosystem health monitoring data and assessment information that directly address users' questions. The portals are accessed through a single point of entry, the *My Water Quality* website (www.CaWaterQuality.net). Each portal is developed by a theme-specific workgroup of issue expert stakeholders that evaluate existing monitoring, assessment and reporting efforts within their theme and work to enhance those efforts so as to improve the delivery of water quality and associated ecosystem health information to the user. As experience to date has demonstrated, portal development provides the context needed to effectively evaluate and then resolve monitoring design, coordination, and access problems. One of these theme-specific workgroups is the California Estuary Monitoring Workgroup, tasked with developing a portal on the health of California's estuaries, initially focusing on the San Francisco Bay-Delta Estuary.

4. Purpose and Objectives of Program:

- (1) Coordinate California water quality and related ecosystem monitoring, assessment, and reporting activities of agencies and organizations both within and outside of state government.
- (2) Deliver water quality and related ecosystem monitoring and assessment information to decision makers and the public via the internet.

5. Timeline for Program Objectives: SB 1070 provides for a ten-year time frame within which the above objectives are to be met, through implementation of the comprehensive monitoring program strategy.

6. Current Status of Program:

Interagency/organizational workgroups have been formed and *My Water Quality* portals developed to address the following themes:

- Is it safe to swim in our waters?
- Is it safe to eat fish and shellfish from our waters?
- Are our wetland ecosystems healthy?

Additional workgroups have been formed and are developing portals to address aquatic ecosystem health for

- streams, lakes and rivers,
- estuaries, and
- rocky intertidal (tidepool) ecosystems.

Workgroups are planned to address drinking water safety and ocean ecosystem health. In addition, a Data Management Workgroup has been formed to tackle issues relating to data management, web development, and geospatial information systems (GIS) that are common to all of the theme-specific workgroups.

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7. Contact Information for Lead Staff of this Program:

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Title	Monitoring Council Coordinator
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8. Associated Total Annual Budget for Program:

No special funding was provided to implement this legislative mandate. To date, most of the funding to develop and implement the comprehensive monitoring program strategy has come from the State Water Board, through the redirection of unspent grant funds and other sources, and the US Environmental Protection Agency. To date, most staff efforts have been voluntary.

9. URL, if a Website is Available: www.CaWaterQuality.net

10. How does adaptive management play a role in your program?

The theme-specific workgroups, under the overarching guidance of the Monitoring Council, continuously work to coordinate monitoring, assessment, and reporting activities of member agencies and organizations, addressing existing and newly encountered issues as needed to deliver data and information to decision makers and the public.

11. Any additional information that would be helpful to understand the program:

The California Estuary Monitoring Workgroup is most applicable to the work of the Delta Independent Science Board. The lead person for this workgroup is Valerie Connor, Science Program Manager for the State and Federal Contractors Water Agency. She may be reached at (916) 476-55053 or vconnor@sfcwa.org.

Thank you very much for taking the time to respond to this questionnaire. Please return your completed questionnaire to Gina Ford (gina.ford@deltacouncil.ca.gov) no later than October 6, 2011.